

LAUGHING HORSE

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Spring — by Gene Kloss



FOUR SKETCHES

by Frank Waters

(Excerpts from his forthcoming novel, "The Dust Within the Rock.")

Spring

Spring, the wanton hussy!

Who has not smelled the perfume of her passing, heard the rustle of her skirts when the apple blossoms flutter to the ground and the rain flicks against the window pane, seen her steps in the long black furrows behind the plow? But who knows Spring? In all of vast America she is never twice the same.

On the rugged lava slopes of the Chuckawallas and the Superstitions the tip-ends of the thorny ocotillo flame out like jets of fire. The vast, noble and parched Mojave, the sandy wastes of the Colorado, Salton Sink and Death Valley burst out for a single week with the ecstatic glory of transient spring, with the colors of desert primrose, verbena, palo verde and cactus flowers and then shimmer with heat waves under the burning sun.

In the great cities the poor take time to breathe between the cold of winter and the heat of summer. Milady orders her summer wardrobe and scans the steamer sailings. It is the time when corporation presidents are most irritable and always "in conference" discussing mighty affairs with the chief of staff:

"By God, Saunders! It was the best swimming hole for miles around. Right in the bend of the river. Had a tree limb sticking out not ten feet above, too . . . Busy, Miss Jackson, I tell you! Can't you see? Tell him to wait! . . . Yes, sir, Saunders. I never saw anything like it. I remember — "



In New England the maples leaf; in the South the magnolias' creamy petals whiten and unfold from the great yellow pear-like buds; on the coasts the steamers and freighters are dry-docked to have their bottoms scraped; Coney Island begins to look alive, and around Catalina Island the flying fish begin to shoot up from the blue water and skim the waves with silver wings.

But in the high hinterland of America, Spring plays with all hopes. The snow caps shrink on the peaks, the water pours down the canyons to three seas, the anemones push sturdily up through snow, the wind rushes ceaselessly over the prairies, the black crows wheel like sea-gulls above the wake of the plow. Surely Spring has passed our way.

But now come the late and heavy snows. The freshly budded lilacs bend and break. Paper-ice forms like a glaze over lakes and ponds. Wild ducks drop from the mists into the marshes. A lone robin chirps disconsolately underneath a bush. The running sap congeals on the spruce bark into hard globules of chewing gum. And still the wind rushes ceaselessly over the prairies.

Fickle Spring! In the high country it is a vast and slow birth with horrible travail. It is a young mother huddled alone in her adobe with the grey-headed crone of a mid-wife, the joy, hope and clawing pain in her eyes when she wipes the sweat from her face and finally begins to boil water. Spring here brings out all the cruelty, the self-torture, the frenzied ecstasy of the thawing earth.

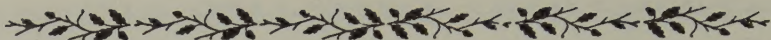
It is Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter. It is the time when the Penitentes gather up in the lonely arroyas in their hidden moradas with walls four feet thick, no windows and but one door; when they come out half-naked, each lashing his back with a whip of cactus until the blood streams down his legs; when the limp,



unconscious figure is finally taken down from the crss and sometimes the women at home find only his shoes on the doorstep at dawn. It is Corpus Cristi in the little Mexican settlements when all the people stream out from mass behind the priest and kneel chanting in the rocky street before each doorway hung with evergreen. It is the Saint's day in May when the first sheep is fleeced; San Juan's Day when all the waters of the world are blessed, and all the grandmothers furtively creep out in the chill dusk of dawn to bathe their flabby, wrinkled bodies in the muddy creeks; the Twenty-fourth of June when, at exactly four o'clock, it rains according to superstition.

At Shallow Water, Lukachukai, Shiprock, at a hundred remote trading posts, the Navajos ride in on their scrawny ponies and pawn the last of their silver. At Isleta the races are run; the Indian lads, with eyes upraised, giving back with splendid bursts of speed their energy to the sun who will return it again to its people. The earth has awakened after its long rest. So now in the Pueblos, where during the pregermination period its sleep has been preserved by taboos against iron shod hooves and wagon wheels, life again begins to stir across the plaza. Green corn dances are held at San Felipe, Zuni, Taos, at San Juan and on the high cliff at Acoma. Ancient acequias are cleaned out with song and ceremony to receive the water from the hills. Sweet Mother, oh Ancient Mother, give forth to your sons again!

Spring is the season of wind, and now the ancient aimless ones give full voice to their ghostly howls. The tumble-weeds bound over the prairies like frightened antelope and pile up five feet high against the fences. The sand blows off the tailing dumps, and women place wet newspapers along the window sills. The ore cars



double, treble as production is hurried up in Cripple Creek.

All aboard behind the snow plow for the first ride to the top of Pike's Peak and a chicken dinner in the Summit House! The high Colorado passes begin to open: La Veta, Hoosier, Rabbit Ear, Monarch, Tennessee and Whiskey Pass, Cumbres and Mosquito. The little mining towns rub from their eyes a snowy sleep, watch for the first train in and mutter incoherently of fresh vegetables. Now the road crews hit the ball. Avalanches make all trains late. The D. & R. G. is stuck again.

The shaggy bear leaves his den, the deer climb higher and rub the moss-growth from their prongs. Who sees the wild geese, hears the woodpecker, for the bitterness, the sweetness, the wracking birth-pains of Spring?

It is a state of mind, a wordless cry, a resurrection, misery and hope sharpened and flatted by the wailing winds. It is a time of unrest and bitter ecstasy, it is youth and memories of youth. In the ghostly flow of time, what am I in Spring? I am alone and lost at the cross-trails of all that has been and will be, my medicine is strong no longer. Manitou! Have pity on your son in Spring!

Summer

Now summer has come in the ghostly flow of time, and down below in the great valleys of the Missouri and the Mississippi, it floods the fields and streets with waves of viscous heat. Horses stagger between furrows, men rip off their wilted collars with weary curses, women drop fainting on the city pavements. In Kansas and Oklahoma the limitless prairies shimmer with wheat. The hot winds over the plains of Texas burn like flames. And in Nebraska,



Summer — by Ila McAfee



along the Platte and the Republican, farmers loll weakly in the shade of cottonwoods praying and cursing for rain.

But here in the high country, a mile and more above the steamy suck of tide water at the ends of America — here in its hinterland, on the roof of the continent, summer comes swiftly, tempestuously, and sings full throated its quick and passionate song.

And so from the heat-filled valleys of the steaming South, the burning Mid-Western prairies and the Eastern cities baking on the plains, flee the sweaty hordes, their eyes uplifted to the cool blue hills. In the summer all roads, all trails lead upward.

They lead upward to the feathery water churning white around the rocks, to the speckled and rainbow trout leaping in the streams. The stunted little Colorado corn sprouts in the clearings, the high-altitude lettuce grows small and firm and crisp. In the high deep valleys the great pines and spruces are felled, stripped of bark, and lay seasoning for new cabins. Long legged colts and velvet coated calves frisk in the pastures among the firs. The small mountain meadows, ten thousand feet high, are green as Virginia lawns; the deer climb higher, into the aspen groves.

In the summer the narrow blue valleys of the Sangre de Cristos, of L'Eau du Mort, Penasco and Cebolla, are again accessible; and in the old and remote Mexican settlements with French names, in Ledoux and Gascon, the dark-faced people stare sullenly out of their adobes at a stranger with the wild remoteness and loneliness in their blue-black eyes.

The oats are blue, a foot high and topped with* green, and shimmer in the breeze like an ocean wave. The mountain corn is topping, growing yellow silk, and rustles with a thin and papery sound. The high desert plateaus are slashed with silver rain, the



sage smells clean and bitter, the mica in the rocks gleams brightly, washed clean of dust.

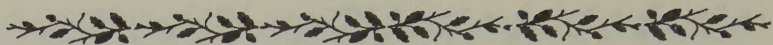
In the summer the thick powdery dust curls up from the lonely roads and grits in the throat like a rasp. It is the time for making adobe bricks, and for the dark-skinned women along the upper Rio Grande to plaster old walls with mud again.

It is the song of summer when the new life leaps highest, and down from the tall blue peaks run the rivers and the streams and the old, old acequias singing of renewal.

Over Cochiti the great white-stallioned clouds nibble at the tops of the pine hills, then gather and stampede at the sound of the great bellied drums below. For now it is time for the summer corn dances in the pueblos, in Santo Domingo, San Felipe, at Zuni, at Santa Clara and below the sacred mountain of Taos. Men and women with long streaming black hair freshly washed with amole, with gourds and evergreen twigs in their red-brown hands, emerge from the kivas and tread powerfully the dusty plaza till sundown to the deep voices of the old men gathered around the drums. Up north among the Arapahoes and Shoshones it is the sun dance, after days of fasting. And over on the three arid Hopi mesas, it is the dance for rain when the grotesquely painted priests come out with rattlesnakes held between their teeth.

And the rain comes, the soft, gently gushing female rain, and the great male rain driving down powerfully to fructify the earth.

Too, it is the time for the rodeos, when the broncos come bucking out of the shutes at Cheyenne, the 101 Ranch, Prescott, Wichita, Roswell and a hundred corrals in between. It is the time for forty-a-month waddies to leap on the horns of plunging steers; to ride down upon, rope and tie another in seventeen seconds; to



leap to fame by sticking eight seconds on another Five-Minutes-to-Midnight, Flying Devil, Baby Cradle or Old Steamboat; or by being trampled or gashed to death like Bonnie McCarrol and 'Ma' Gibson.

And in Little London it is the time when the summer crowds throng the hotel verandahs, and fill the rooming houses and the summer cottages up the canyons, and for Little Londoners to return from parading Europe and open up their great summer homes. In the summer Buckskin Charley and his band of Utes come down from the reservation to pitch their tepees once again in the shadow of the Peak, and for the three-day Shan Kive when Indians, miners and the old white-headed pioneers parade with the old covered wagons and dance in the streets at night. Up the narrow trails from Manitou a thousand burros climb with jolting tourists. Everyone wears khaki pants and riding boots. It is the time when the tourist-drivers shout from their hacks: "Throw snowballs from the top of Pike's Peak on the Fourth of July!" and the blunt-nosed little engine snorts up the Cog Road pushing its tiny car. In the summer each Sunday the Wild Flower Special puffs up into the mountains and returns with a thousand arms filled with great wilted and bedraggled columbines, with flaming Indian paint brushes, purple penstemons, wild orchids, bluebells, snow-on-the-mountains, pussy's toes, scarlet St. Joseph's flowers — all the rampant glory of the hill-sides and mountain slopes jerked up by the roots, wilted in the sun during the ride home, and stuffed into the trash cans as the train unloads at the station.

It is summer too in Cripple Creek when the big mines boost up production, and the independent old-timers dig out their ears, and in some forgotten gulch give their old workings hell while the ground is thawed. Up from Little London ride the tourists on the



Short Line, the mile straight up and the twenty west that Teddy Roosevelt claimed had bankrupted the English language, but which has still enough adjectives for the Donkey Derby and the colored ore specimens salting the Mary McKinney and on sale to gaping strangers.

Beautiful, opulent, full-blossomed season of the year, summer in the high country is the convergence of all trails. And here in the Colorado Rockies with fifty-one named peaks over 14,000 feet high and over a thousand more than 10,000 feet high, Pike's Peak, the beacon of more than a century and the best known peak in America, looms up from the parched prairies majestically defying time and silence. At its foot sits Little London: summer is her hour.

Autumn

And now it is October again, the time of change; October and autumn, the season that "the Americans" call fall, says James Fenimore Cooper, because it is the time when the leaves fall.

It is the time when the cottonwoods and willows along the acequias burst into a last flaming yellow, and horses' hoofs ring louder on the hard earth. The crows grow blacker, bleaker, and shine like polished knobs along the fence posts. The wind rustles through the corn milpas, the brittle tawny fields spotted with sunflowers. It is the time of harvest; when the double bladed axes swing in the forests and the teams strain under jags of sweet smelling cedar; when the old women trudge down the trails with bags of pinones; when the ripened squash glisten by moonlight under a coat of silver rime. Up the Rio Arriba, there, and the Rio Grande, the adobes are hung with chile, a thousand necklaces of scarlet.



It is the time of fiestas when the old ox-carts rumble out on wooden wheels, and old lace and Spanish combs are drawn from ancient chests half sunk into the earthen floors; it is the scrape of leaves upon the patio flagstones, the music of guitars, the old dances, Varsoviana, Vaquero and the Buckaroo.

In the Indian pueblos it is San Geronimo and All Souls Day. The grotesquely painted delight-makers, the Koshares, come out to mimic and pantomime their Mexican and white neighbors, to climb the tall bare pole for the slaughtered sheep and squash on top. It is All Saints Day and the Day of the Dead; and in the cold misty dawn-dusk, by the light of the first fires in the outdoor ovens, the women creep out with round loaves of bread and shawls of food to take to their dead. October is the corn ripe moon. Of all months, it is America's month. The corn comes in by wagonloads; Indian corn, the crop of America's soil: blue ears and black, blood red, bronze, pink, yellow and speckled. The colors spout out of shucking hands, they gleam drying against the dull adobe walls, they hang braided from every doorpost. At night the little water drums, the peyote drums, throb across the pastures. White-sheeted figures sing softly in deep male voices down by the little stream. The first frost has come, "the thunder sleeps." So now to Shallow Water, from out of a desert wilderness of fifty thousand square miles, from mesa and canyon, gather thousands of Navajos for their great fall sings. And the nine bitter, frosty nights draw down upon the river's elbow, upon the plain of flowering bonfires.

It is the time of reds and russets and spoiled-apple browns on the hillsides, when the great male Rockies turn blue and white, and the pines grow smoky in the haze, and the aspens quake and color. It is the sound of a ranch hand's rifle bringing down a deer,



Autumn — by Helen Blumenschein



the chatter of pine squirrels and the alarm of a bear in the mountain pasture. It is the smell of burning brush, and bacon in a pan. It is the tall tales of the time when the long lines of ore wagons creaked up the Pass, when men draw the long bow in speaking of Creede, Tin Cup, Fair Play, Leadville, Buckskin Joe and the old ghost towns of the Colorado Rockies. It is the time when Cripple Creek, two miles high, draws in its horns for winter and the first snow drives over Tenderfoot Hill and whitens the shaft houses in Poverty Gulch. A thousand half wild burros troop down into the streets begging from door to door like dogs for masters. At night the long train of empties puffs slowly up the Bull Hill junction with four engines. You can hear them four miles off and see the furnace-red glow from their tenders, then, in October, when Cripple Creek is holing up for the winter. It is the time when the pot-bellied directors, down below, order up production before the drifts pile shoulder high; when the miners line the insides of their shanties with sheets of cork and Sunday editions of the Denver Post. It is the time when the great mines, the Independence and the Portland, the Jack Pot, Cresson, Mary McKinney, Wild Horse and the American Eagles 1 and 2, grow busy as great liners dry-docked on the mountain tops, and the little fellows board up their tunnels and drift to town to make a stake for next year's beans.

It is Fall, with its wine-warm days and frosty nights, when thoughts like the young deer leap the stake-and-rider fences and race through the hardy, stunted Colorado corn, and the heart sings the music of the gritty stars above the lonely unnamed peaks, and all the body quivers with a nameless ache as it listens to the ancient aimless winds that cry in Fall, on a cold October night.



Winter

Winter ! Who knows winter except the hill-bred northerner who then comes into his own ? Like all seasons it is a world apart, and he who has once known its white and haunting silence feels elsewhere an outcast.

At the first frost the land changes tone; a deeper note is heard. The heaving earth subsides, sleeps under its thickening blanket. The lakes glass over like frosted mirrors; the last of the mallards and long legged herons rise from the freezing marshes; the muskrats slide out of the ponds. Long slender aspen trunks turn white. Through the gelid gloom of the forests flap the great arctic owls like ghostly white bats. Bear grumble sleepily in their lairs. From timberline deer wind down daintily out of the drifts.

The deep snows come. Softness alternates harshness. The tall gaunt peaks rear whiter, clearer, sharper against the amethyst sky. They seem stupendous stalagmites aspiring to heaven from the earth-cavern below.

Winter wears the year's most precious jewels. Necklaces of snow birds are strung between fence posts. Diamond dust glitters upon the fields. Glace spruce branches drop lavallieres of metallic cones. Snow flakes are designs in the abstract, frosted window panes cut-glass and rock crystal. The peaks are robed in white satin. The evening sun is a ruby in a platinum setting. Lakes are chunk turquoise mounted in hand-beaten Navajo silver.

But a single wind-warped, gnarled juniper hangs to the side of a snowy cliff a thousand feet high.

This is winter's real beauty, a stark nakedness of line with which nothing can compare.



Now all vibrates to a higher pitch: the hunger howl of cruising wolves muted by the shrieking winds; the music of the wintry stars; the pale sea-green, the deep blue and frosty white, the purple of the spectrum's cold end.

Thor and Wotan, the stern old gods of northern myths, of the Icelanders and the Vikings, ride high above the storm. And the blood warms to the memory of mead swilled in Valhalla. It sinks down too in the tepees with the old men crouching close to dew flap and fire, and retelling legends of the old Plains tribes, of the White Buffalo and the White Hunger, of Manitou and Old Man Coyote. In all the pueblos, winter is the time of tale and legend, of instruction and tribal lore.

Deep winter! Deep, deep winter! It is a metaphysical phrase. For in winter, deep winter, the blood sinks down into its homeland, the hearth is the enduring symbol, and the wanderer yearns for his old seat.

Corral fences are lined with evergreen branches to keep out the wind. How red glow the willows along the creek!

You can smell the buckwheat-cakes batter souring on the back porches all winter long. It thickens the blood; you can tell in early March when it is time to stop by the rash coming out on the skin.

The old stage road to Cripple Creek and Leadville in winter was "the Highway of Frozen Death." But now the squeak of the ore trains is heard for miles. In the mines, production is speeded up. "Hit the ball there, Handsome! If you can't keep warm by working, I'll have to send you down to a warmer climate!" How cold and still it is up there on the roof of the continent where miners' wives warm up frozen dynamite in their kitchen ovens and hack off chips of meat with a hand axe. The bare granite boulders crack



open like pistol shots. Down below in the canyons the snow drifts over the fence tops to obscure a man-made world. Scattered elk herds are starving up to their bellies in snow and rest their great antlers on the frozen crust. In the town park along the little narrow-gauge ricks of hay are thrown up, and to them the great weary beasts are led staggering down the steep and narrow streets.

The little canyon towns of the high Rockies hibernate in winter while Whiskey Pass and Monarch, Tennessee, Rabbit Ear, and Wolf Creek Pass are closed. And out on the prairies the little villages are marooned in an ocean of ice.

Beautiful white-blue winter! It is a spectral stillness whose one enduring witness is Pike's Peak.

At its foot in Little London, Tejon Street and Nevada, Huerfano, Cucharas and Kiowa, even Bijou Street gleams with lamps. "The Boys" display the latest high-belted Kuppenheimer "o'coats" to the newest members of the Country Club. But over on the mesa the lights of the mill still glow, and to it the hardy workers trudge in bright checkered mackinaws. The great homes have emptied their restless owners, the big tourist hotels glow like empty barns. In Little London, winter—deep winter—is the native's hour.

The great cities of deep and spacious America draw into themselves in winter. Bread lines reach longer on icy pavements. Rich dowagers swathed in furs glide by in stuffy limousines to yawn through European operas whose music is more incomprehensible to them than the garbled song-speech. Down off the sloping rooftop of the continent on the sea coasts, the ships creak against icy wharves, navel oranges are picked inland.

But here, deep in the hinterland, the pinon knot makes the hottest blaze, scarlet kinnikinnic berries the brightest color, cedar



Winter — by Ward Lockwood



the sweetest perfume. And the evergreens, the great pines, the regal spruces and shaggy firs—the immemorial conifers, are the symbol of everlasting life to weary eyes.

In the winter the soul sinks home. It is rest for renewal, a gathering of life in another period of gestation. And so during the pregermination season the little Indian plazas bar the sleeping mother earth to iron shod hooves and wagon wheels. Step softly, brother!

Oh, the year around I shall restlessly wander space. But in winter I seek depth. In winter my soul sinks home.



Death of Tonita

by Ramon Zarro

Raw stems of willow and raw winter sky,
Who would have said Tonita could die?
Radiant she was with red-gold cheeks
Like autumn down the aspen creeks;
Eager she was and girlish warm
Like the wine-ripe fruit on her father's farm.
Frozen the streams, and the fruit will freeze
With the winter wind through the orchard trees.
The church bell tolls with a frozen sound;
They dig her grave in the frozen ground.



A Primary Lesson on the Subject of ROCK

by Edward C. Cabot

A rock is held together by gravity and molecular forces. Gravity is a visual force: there is nothing that this force does not affect, no matter if it is a continent or a pin. Molecular forces include adhesion and cohesion of things so small that man cannot see them and knows them only as forces that exist.

Rocks may be divided into three major types: igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic. Igneous rocks well up from far below the surface of the earth and are extended on the surface through volcanoes or fissures, or intruded in the shape of dikes and sills, lacoliths and batholiths. The sedimentary are the products of erosion and they represent the land surface of a certain epoch and become consolidated in stream channels. Metamorphic rocks are usually the oldest rocks, that have become folded, sheared and buried through geologic time. They are preserved, generally, in mountain chains.

Tracing the geologic past is like a detective story. You have a plot and you know how your characters move and why, as illustrated by events in the present. Then you slowly trace back into history one event after another until the story unravels itself. But the characters do not always behave; and it is the learning of these habits that is the difference between text-book geology and nature, which has no set rules. This is what makes geology fascinating.

For example, let us site the Rio Grande basaltic lava flows. How did they get to their present position and when? First, we



look at the present: at such world wonders as the crater of Kilauea in the Hawaiian Islands, where an observatory is located on the crater rim and scientists spend night and day studying the activity on the center floor and sides of the volcano. During eruptions, fissures break out on the sides of the crater and viscous lava flows down to imperil the towns below. So much for the present, which shows us how volcanoes act; let us now look at what we know of the Rio Grande basalts.

On Black Mesa, in the Espanola Valley, the lava dips to the south-east and therefore came from the north-west. As one traces the lava north and west, the flows thin out against the Tusas hills. So somewhere between the present Rio Grande and the Tusas country, was their source. The most likely explanation, is that the lava welled out of the ground from fissures and small volcanoes and that the flows then covered over these breaks, obliterating them.

What is unusual, is that the lava flows are five hundred feet thick near Taos and are interbedded in deformed gravels as they dip away from the Sangre de Cristos. To explain this great thickness, we assume that the lava must have poured into a great canyon previous to the present Rio Grande, which was carved by some ancestor of the Rio Grande of today. The deformed gravels mean that the Rio Grande basin was still being depressed between the two flanking mountain chains. Their date would be later than the Miocene and Pliocene time, since they are uncomformable on the Santa Fe formation. This gives the flows an age of somewhere between five and one million years. At that time they flowed out over the ancient surface, destroying everything in their path, and have now become visible again, due to erosion.





THE LOOPHOLE

by Ramon Naya

The turbulent, torrential rains, plunging almost
Through the loophole in the defending window,
Rebounding,
Spat cool, minute stings, thrillingly,
At my hushed flesh.

And my eyes stare out,
The only loophole;
For without them there would be no rain —
Only
The cool caresses of your hands
On my hushed flesh.

“I see you there behind the window !
Come out, protected seer !
My arrows shall be your embraces,
And they will make you grow,
And I will make you sing !”
My flesh is hushed at this, my flesh,
The only loophole;

For without it
There would be no arrows,
And no cool embraces,
And no hands,
No hush —

No hush.



CHICKEN THIEF

by Robert Bright

All within a year, Karl Wurtzel has grown up. It is fairly startling! Suddenly he has shot upwards like an horticultural specimen and become manly and awkward, and very suspicious about his mother.

Up to this time, his mother has seemed intolerably wise. Now, suddenly, Karl realizes how ignorant she is—how, when she deliberately accuses the Mexican girl next door of stealing her chickens, she is submitting to unworthy prejudices.

Karl recognizes, from having been brought up that way, how his mother's mind works. It is enough for someone to be Mexican to be dirty, and so to be under a cloud in a neighborhood where everybody else is neat and respectable—and attends Protestant churches.

And if Karl's mother has fastened on the girl in particular as the thief, it is because, having observed her running bare-legged next door, having watched the supple movements of her pliant young body, she has concluded that of the Tafoya family, the girl is the most capable of climbing the fence into the chicken yard.

But Karl Wurtzel has made an amazing discovery. He has suddenly found how it is no effort at all to overlook the fact that a pretty Mexican girl does not wash much. So that in his dreams at night, taking her for swift, breathless drives in the second-hand roadster he does not yet own—but equipped with the thrilling chromium horn he has already won in a raffle—Karl knows for a positive fact that the Tafoya girl is no thief.



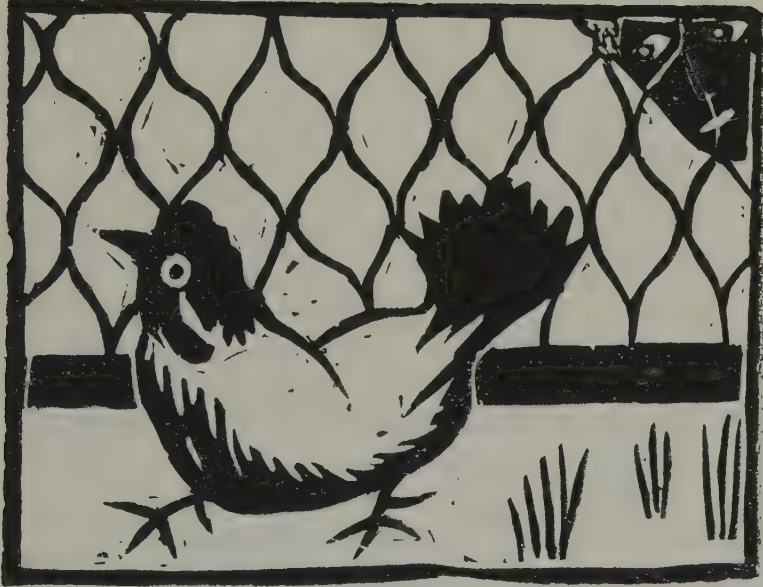
Even were he not already convinced, he knows it. Because to preclude any danger of her chickens being stolen at night, Mrs. Wurtzel locks the coop with two padlocks, and there has been no sign of tampering. So that even Karl's mother has to admit it is in the day time the chickens disappear. And yet, they go so silently that although Mrs. Wurtzel keeps her ears frantically alert, she never has the satisfaction of hearing a single suspicious sound.

To her this silence is simply exasperating. To Karl it is conclusive proof of the girl's innocence. For Karl has seen his mother kill chickens and has heard them die. He has witnessed the dreadful scuffle in the hen yard and listened to the agonizing squawks of the doomed birds as his mother has carried them by their legs, upside down, to the chopping block.

He is thinking of that this morning, especially, as he walks slowly towards the chicken yard. Up to now, when a fowl has had to die, it has been always his mother who has attended to the horrible business. But this morning, having grown up now, having become manly, it is Karl who is all at once dispatched to do the killing. There is an old rooster, a tough bird, and Karl has been ordered to whack his head off.

The Wurtzel chicken yard is over in the corner of the garden where it cannot be seen at all from the Wurtzel back stoop. Across the fence is the back yard of the Mexican family, and this is undeniably a mess. But there is a dilapidated grape arbor, close to where the Wurtzel chickens like to come and scratch, and here the Mexicans have slung the hammock with the faded pastel stripes, and the patched hole in the middle.

Often Mr. Tafoya occupies this hammock to rest his mysteriously lame leg and to snore musically. Other times, the strong,



"There is an old rooster, a tough bird..."

From a drawing by Frieda Lawrence



gay cloth yields to the fine shape of Mrs. Tafoya, and then the ropes squeak and the arbor shakes and the Wurtzel chickens move indignantly over to the far side of the yard.

But today, it is the girl who is lying there under the arbor, reading the funny pictures. The hammock is slung at such an angle that Karl, letting himself into the chicken yard, sees only the top of the funny page and only one slim brown leg dangling over the edge. And while it thrills him and makes his stomach churn, it is as if he feels his mother instantly at his back, shaking her finger, scolding irritably, warning him that the girl is a chicken thief.

Resentfully, Karl averts his eyes and concentrates his confused and excited mind on the rooster who stands in the middle of the yard, his red crest bristling and his white tail feathers gorgeously curved with a brazen suggestion of utter indispensableness.

But Karl recognizes it is just this attitude of the bird's magnificent tail that is misleading. The fact is, the rooster has not only grown old and tough, but his cantankerous habits have become very annoying to the hens and are distinctly interfering with their useful practice of egg laying.

So that there is no reason on earth why Karl shouldn't take it on his own manly shoulders to whack the rooster's head off to please his mother. And yet, looking at the rooster now, the bird has never appeared quite so beautiful, and the idea of an egg quite so unimportant, and the prospect of death, with all its frantic, noisy resistance, quite so horrible.

Uneasily, Karl looks in the direction of his house. The kitchen stoop is fortunately hidden, so that his mother can't watch him. But that will hardly help matters in the end. Karl knows that his mother's patience will last just so long before she will step to the



kitchen door and yell loud enough for everybody in the neighborhood to hear. And she will have no idea how such an undignified performance will embarrass him.

The fear of his mother's screaming at him, impels Karl to take a few tentative steps towards the rooster; but when the bird flutters his wings and cackles excitedly, Karl hesitates and, without realizing it, looks helplessly at the Mexican girl in the hammock.

She has put down her funny paper now and moved over on her side, and her chin is resting on the edge of the hammock, her eyes watching Karl. When he suddenly turns, she says, "Hello."

Karl frowns and looks away quickly, carrying with him the exciting picture of her red dress and a vision of her toes which she has been wiggling. Cautiously he turns his head back until he is regarding her out of the corners of his eyes, obliquely, and then, without wishing exactly to encourage her, he grunts.

He certainly hasn't intended his acknowledgment to be a signal for her to leave the hammock; and when he sees her actually get up, squirming her body to let down her dress, he withdraws several paces in a kind of panic. But the girl comes straight to the fence and presses her body and her face close against the wire.

"Are you afraid to kill him?"

Her mouth opens in a smile and one bare arm comes through a hole in the fence and points at the rooster.

Karl follows the line of the girl's finger, his heart pounding with a sickening reverberation. He glances at his house, then back at the girl.

"I'm not afraid," he says with trembling solemnity. The girl withdraws her arm and clasps the fence wire with both hands.



"Well, you look scared," she says, and then she throws her head way back, violently, so that her black hair swirls.

Karl's fists clench and his knuckles become like chalk.

"Well, I'm not scared," he repeats. "Only I don't like to kill things."

The girl presses her face even closer to the fence.

"Nothing?"

"No, nothing!"

"Not flies?"

"Well, naturally, I don't mind flies."

"Why?"

"I don't know. Maybe it's because they're ugly."

"And the rooster is beautiful?"

Karl shifts uncomfortably. "Of course he is. Don't you think so?"

She thinks awhile, and in the process she lets herself sag, until she is literally hanging by her hands from the fence. Then slowly she stiffens her legs, bracing them against the base of the fence, until she becomes v-shaped.

"He's beautiful," she admits, finally. "But he isn't no good anymore."

Karl is fascinated by her position; but her expert conclusion about the rooster shocks him out of his awe.

"How do you know that?" he asks.

"Oh, I just know," she says, and retaining her rigid position, she swings her posterior in an arc, back and forth, rhythmically. Karl watches her, spellbound, until suddenly she straightens and points again at the rooster.

"If you're scared to kill him, I'll do it."



"You?"

"Sure, I've killed lots of chickens." Her hands grope upwards on the fence until she is poised on her toes like a ballet dancer.

"You better not!" Karl warns, but the words do not come very loud.

Already the girl's feet grip the wire strands. Next her long, smooth legs come over the top. For a moment she holds her body poised, her calves and thighs gleaming taut, her heels digging into the wire, her toes pointing straight down. Then she jumps, putting force into her leap, so that she lands well inside the fence and within a foot of Karl.

There is a flurry among the chickens and Karl draws back, gesturing frantically, his eyes frightened, thinking of his mother.

"Now listen," he begins, but his voice cracks and the rest of the words are swallowed in confusion.

The girl's eyes grow perfectly round. "Don't you want me to kill him?"

Karl opens his mouth, closes it, then opens it again. This time it is better. "Now listen," he begins once more, "you shouldn't have climbed over that fence. "You—" He interrupts himself to peer anxiously at his house again, craning his neck. He would drop dead were he to see his mother; but he does not see her and grows calmer. "Well, you see, what I mean is, my mother doesn't like people messing around her chickens."

"Maybe she thinks I steal them?" The girl speaks without rancor, without, in fact, any sense of guilt.

It is Karl who grows red in the ears. "No, no, not that!" he protests. "That's not true. What I mean is, she's just terribly fussy. She—" He stops again, his temples throbbing, and looks



down at the girl's feet. And though his eyes sting and his mind is in a confusion, he can't help observing how dirty they are. Even her legs are that way, quite dirty; and her knees, too, almost black, in fact. And now he sees how even her dress is not washed clean, and how the hem is frayed, and how the belt buckle is broken, and how there is a seam under one arm that is torn down to her breast. He gulps and shakes his head and sets his jaw and looks her straight in the eye.

"I'm sorry," he says.

"Oh, that's all right," she says, casually, "I'll kill the rooster for you, and then I'll go."

She smiles again, opening her mouth, showing her bright teeth; then lifting herself so that she becomes, all at once, several inches taller, she pivots and moves towards the rooster.

Karl grabs at her, but he is too slow and awkward.

"Now listen," he cries, "you can't kill him. Why, you've got to have a hatchet."

The girl turns, deliberately, and makes a strong twisting motion with her hands. "I'll wring his neck," she says. "That's much better. You'll see."

She moves on again, walking swiftly, but without the effort of haste; her body begins to bend as she comes nearer the rooster, who has taken it into his head to crow. The girl moves around him, keeping herself so that she is always approaching the bird from the back. Lowering her body still more, she reaches out her arms and spreads wide her fingers. Now even her knees bend and slowly her arms come together, her fingers curling. She does not spring at the rooster. She simply moves over and down on him, evenly and without effort, and as she straightens her body, she



swings the great bird and snaps his neck.

The rooster is dead and he has died without a sound. Even the hens, through whom the girl has moved so swiftly and with such quiet graceful stealth, have been quite unconcerned. But what impresses Karl is only this: he feels no horror. No horror at all, only an intense excitement, almost pleasant it seems.

Even as she comes towards him, swinging the rooster as she has killed him, by the neck, Karl feels no horror.

"Are you sad because the beautiful bird is dead?"

Karl replies gravely, his voice pitched unnaturally low. "No, I'm not." He pauses. "And thank you!"

"Oh, that's nothing," she assures him. "I've killed lots of chickens."

Karl nods. "I know," he says.

The girl smiles happily. "My mother learned me," she explains. "She learned me to kill chickens so they don't squawk." She hands the rooster to Karl. "You better take him back quick now."

He takes the rooster the way she gives it to him, by the neck, and watches her go to the fence. She turns there and points back at his house. "You better go," she warns, "your mother'll get mad."

Even as she speaks, a shrill petulant cry comes from the kitchen porch. "Karl! What are you doing?"

The boy's face becomes white and his hand clenches around the rooster's throat. "I'm here, Mother."

"Is the rooster killed yet?"

"Yes, he's dead."

"But I didn't hear no noise. Karl, are you telling the truth?"

The boy looks towards the girl, his mouth trembling. But she is already over the fence, running to the hammock.



"Karl, do you hear me? Answer your mother!"

Like a fury, Karl rushes in among the hens, brandishing the rooster over their heads, until their terrified cackling drowns his mother's voice. Then he stops, suddenly, and the arm holding the rooster jerks down.

In the hammock, the girl is swinging now, her long legs held straight, her black hair streaming, her head thrown back, her mouth wide open with laughter.

Karl stares at her, his eyes wet with anguish. Then he turns slowly, and it is really ludicrous the way he walks off, his legs so stiff, almost like an old man; his shoulder slanting from the weight of the warm dead bird clutched in his hand.

He does not go directly to his mother, though. He stops at the shed, and there, with one fierce stroke, he first whacks off the rooster's head.



Early Winter

by Spud Johnson

Now that the leaves are gone,
The trees at night are hung with stars.

And as winter approaches,
My dreams are also starred
With a foliage more beautiful —
And more distant.



No More Green Boughs

by Mary Miller

No more green boughs, and leafy traceries
And shaded valleys, green between the hills;
But these alluvial acres; and these mountains
And this bare desert, stripped of shady trees;
Give me cool, candid dawns and evening intervals
Serene and spacious, like the drawing of my breath;
And the great nights when all the marching stars
Descend into the desert; I require these:
And let me count the storms and watch the thunder break
Above the enormous plains, and see the clouds disclose—
Swiftly—like visions to the mind of Blake—
The wrath of God—and the celestial rose
Opening effulgent petals in the rain.



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Music, But With Much Rhyme, Reason
AND TRUTH; also A MORAL**



Written, Illustrated & Printed
at Taos, New Mexico, in the Studio of

THE LAUGHING HORSE

Which is situated near one of the Curves of the
Acequia Madre about a Mile from the Village itself

**by SPUD JOHNSON, a
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SANTA FEE SAL

A BALLAD

I always said, "It's a quaint little town."
And I always thought it was;
But listen, my boy, while I write down
My story and its cause.

It's a long time now since I left the city,
Though it's longer than it seems:
The reason is — oh, what a pity ! —
That I've lost all my dreams.

I came to the town called Santa Fee
With all my youth and beauty;
I came with equanimity
And bringing all my booty.

I came to forget the smoke and grime
And all my misdeeds, too;
I came to forget the city's crime
And start my life anew.

A little house on the brow of a hill,
A quaint little house of mud —
(The dear old place is standing still
With a sign on it: "Help Wanted.")

That quaint little house with a door of blue,
A serape on the bed,
Some ears of corn of colored hue
And chile scarlet red —

Oh, dear little house of my abode:
No basement and no attic:
You stood aloof from the dusty road
—So simple, yet erratic.

'Twas there I lived for a span of years —
(What happiness that covers!)
I lived with no regrets or tears,
Without bathrooms or lovers.

But listen, my boy, and I will show
How everything that mattered
Was taken from me, leaving woe,
And all my life was shattered.



Santa Fee Sal, a Memory in Basswood

Which, it must be admitted, is almost an exact copy of a Portrait by Maria M. de Orozco, who is a schoolgirl in Guadalajara, Mexico ---- but she'll never know the difference, I'll bet.

They took the earth beneath my feet,
My dusty, winding trail
And made of it a hard paved street,
Despite my anguished wail.

They brought electric lights to take
The place of my sweet oil,
And telephones which simply make
My very blood to boil.

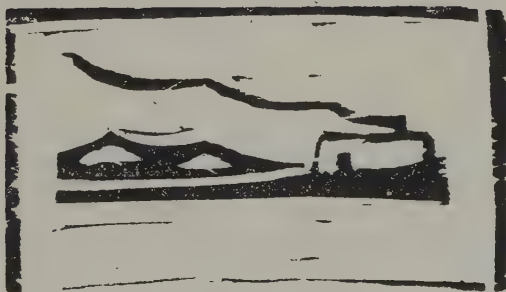
They brought out artists—oh, my soul!
And writers from the East.
My cup ran over—AND my bowl:
God, what a bitter feast!


They made a beastly city-thing;
A city council taxed us:
And now the city people fling
A golf-club in the cactus.

Contract bridge is now the rage;
Simplicity is dampened;
Orchids grow instead of sage—
Society is rampant!

And so, my boy, I came to live
Up in this big hotel,
And I've nothing now that I can give,
Except the key to hell !

Try to forget your Santa Fee Sal,
Go back to old New York
And find yourself a rural gal
In the wilds of Central Park.






No, no! Not in the White House, NO!

By Lincoln Steffens

Yes, but—admitting all that goes without saying—how would it look—I mean how would it sound to have laughter ringing in and out of the White House in broad daylight? There has been laughter there before. I have seen T.R. slap his leg and roar, but he put his other hand over his mouth and threw a crafty, respectful glance around at the closed doors. Some sense of decorum. And Harding laughed at me once there. I asked him to join with the governors of states in a general Amnesty for a lot of conscientious criminals who had done foul deeds for a good Labor cause and he said he would if I'd get his cabinet.

“No,” he amended, “you get me two and I'll attend to the rest. Get Hoover and Wilson, the Secretary of Labor.”

And when I came right back quick with the answer, Harding laughed one short snort which, however, he cut off in apparent fright. No one heard it but a clerk who ran in, looked, saw the president sitting up all dignified and sober, and so knew that he had been mistaken. No one knew, no honest man knows that anyone has ever laughed, heartily, in the White House; not the way Al Smith would laugh, not all over, with glee.

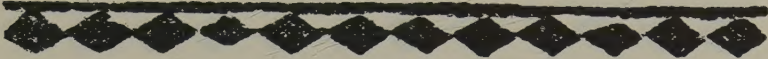


This I am sure of because once when I was in doubt about it—one time when a president was doing things he didn't want to do, but had to; when he was eating dirt and tasting it, I got hold of a menial in the permanent House service and I asked him whether a president didn't ever laugh. He said:

"Yes, they most all do, sometimes, but," he lowered his voice to a whisper, "they have a way of doing it. It's a secret; I mustn't tell you; if it leaked that I told, I'd be fired." And then he did what he ached to do: he told it.


"A President," he said, "after he's broke in, when he just has to bust — a President, he waits till it's bed-time, then he kneels down in his little nightie beside his little bed—just like a poo' little child; he covers his face with his two hands, like he's praying, and buries his whole head in the bed-clothes, and — well, now, to be honest with you, I can't swear to what he does down there, but his shoulders shake and shake and when he rises up there is tears running down his countenance. Maybe he prays and maybe he weeps, but I think—our 'pinion is that he has been reviewing his day's work, and letting go what he's been holding in, and being honest to God with hisself just for a minute. Any way he's always cross, if he sees you, but he don't mean it. He feels better."

Now this witness was a colored man and colored folks tell white lies. His testimony may have been colored by his race sense of the pathetic. But, as I was saying, would Al Smith have the decency to



do what the other, ordinary, presidents do? Let's suppose that he were elected and in the White House and found he had to do what he did not want to do. And, remember, a president just has to do what other men want him to do. You can't go back on the fellows that have contributed, among them, some millions of money to put you in the White House to save the country. You can not and Al Smith won't. Al may not do as much for as many of them as some presidents have done. He is a Tammany man, you know, and Tammany knows what graft is and what it isn't. A Tammany man never makes a mistake; all his errors are crimes because, dogonit, he is on. Some presidents can think themselves around to believing that a wrong is a right, and that's why they may be really praying when they kneel down at night and shake their shoulders. They have been to college and know how to think. But Al Smith can't. Al Smith is educated (right) and he is experienced (wrong); he is intelligent. The way he laughs, now, before he is elected, shows that.

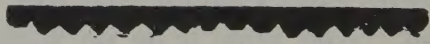
And so, I ask you in all candor, what will Al Smith do when he is President? What will he do when he finds he isn't the only man that is president? What will he do, when, a democrat, he has to hold up the tariff wall against cheap foreign labor? It isn't enough, you realize, to do that; you got to believe in it, and Al Smith can't swallow that sort of stuff and stay dignified. And what'll he do when he has to boost business and soak labor? And when he has to



stand by fellows that swipe the Tea-pot Dome and other natural resources and turn them into power and campaign contributions? And then, when, against imperialism and out for world-peace and the limitation of armament, he tries to get all the other nations to agree to hold down their armies and navies to no more than we need to lick the weak, little, backward countries that we have to bring into our empire, what will Al Smith do then? And when he is remonstrating with good, old England and bad young Italy and obstinate, intelligent, logical France for their war plans at the very same time he has to be sending a few marines and bombing planes into Nicaragua to slay bandits there, how can he argue with them and keep a straight face? And Mexico, and Cuba, and the Philipines and—? And the American farmers? And the people?

I tell you President Smith will be apt to laugh. Out loud. In the day time. In the White House.

I tell you this and I warn you: if ever a President laughs, as Mr. Smith surely will laugh, so that the People and the Foreign powers hear him and see him and catch the contagion of it — as they might — then this whole political business will bust, the whole world will shake on its knees, and, worst of all, these United States will never be the same again. Never.



Mr. Lincoln Steffens, whose article we herewith present, has been for many years an indefatigable supporter of every worthy liberal Cause, and a particularly valient champion of Labor, both in the United States and in Mexico. He is now living in Carmel, California, where he is said to be writing his autobiography.

The cover design is from a woodblock by Miss Olive Rush, a Santa Fe artist.

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